

**MINUTES SUMMARY OF THE COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY VESSEL  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
OCTOBER 4-5, 1999 – 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

A meeting of the Commercial Fishing Vessel Advisory Committee (CFIVAC) was held at Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D.C. Representing the Coast Guard were RADM North, Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection; RADM Ernest Riutta, Assistant Commandant for Operations; CAPT Brian Basel, Chief, Office of Compliance; CAPT Dave Westerholm, Deputy, Office of Compliance; CDR Mark Prescott, Executive Director of CFIVAC and LCDR Randy Clark, Assistant Executive Director of CFIVAC. The following Committee members were present:

Dennis Potter	Jane Eisemann
Linda Bonet	Leslie Hughes
Ginny Goblirsch	David Green
Donald Hall	James Herbert
Rutledge Leland	Sean Martin
Jimmy Martin, Sr.	Kathy Ruhle
Lawrence Simms	Barbara Bragdon

The following Committee members were absent:

Julie Aydelotte	Pete Aparicio
Angela Sanfilippo	

The meeting was brought to order by Chairman Mr. James Herbert. The Committee, Coast Guard, and audience members made introductions. CDR Prescott requested comments on minutes from the previous meeting. Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

New member, Barbara Bragdon was sworn in by RADM North.

RADM North welcomed the committee members and audience. His opening comments were as follows:

The Coast Guard used recommendations from the committee and fishing vessel safety coordinators on the use of the Fishing Vessel Casualty Task Force report to develop an action plan to reduce the number of casualties and vessel losses. It contains some short-term action items and some long-term items. After the presentation of these action items, he wanted to hear the committee's comments on this plan. He said one of the things the committee told the Coast Guard is that there are still some data elements that are lacking, so G-MOA went one by one through approximately a thousand cases. G-MOA will show the Committee some of the statistics today. At the Atlantic Area change of command, the incoming Area Commander, VADM Shkor said in his speech that fishing vessel safety would be a priority. There is also a Fishing Vessel Safety Week in the works. The Coast Guard wants to use such an opportunity to illustrate the principle causes of death to the

fishing community and provide fishermen with the lessons learned. Afterwards, examiners would be available if anyone would like a fishing vessel safety exam. The presentation the Committee will receive from LT Paitl follows very closely with the committee's input from the last meeting with regard to implementing recommendations from the Task Force report. Some of the action items will require legislation, but many will not. It also reflects regional differences, as well as vessel size and area of responsibility.

LT Joe Paitl briefed the committee on Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety program and action plan.

Dave Dickey, Compliance Analysis Division, presented the data extracted from approximately 1,100 casualty reports from 1994-1998. It took 550-600 hours to research and review these cases.

LT Penoyer, Investigations Division, briefed the committee on the future of casualty analysis. He explained there are two kinds of data, indexing/referencing and descriptive. Type of vessel, fishery, and region are examples of indexing data. He showed an example of a pull down list, which the new system will have for indexing fields. This will enable them to enter and extract more specific dockside exam and at-sea boarding information. It will also include more geographic information. Another useful feature will be a timeline, which will provide the event sequence of the casualties and a better description of the casualties. Gear type will also be included in the new system. The new system will be easy to modify as we recognize information that needs to be incorporated in the future.

RADM North expects the data analysis component online by the end of the year. The entire system will be completed in 18 –24 months. This new system was actually started in 1986. It has been in the works half of his career and he will make sure it gets finished.

LT Penoyer asked the committee to let him know if there were other things that they would like to see captured.

Ms. Goblirsh said that assuming you are looking at vessel types, trolling isn't listed so there would be a big gap in data, since that's probably where the most accidents happen in the Northwest.

LT Penoyer said that trolling is probably captured in the unknown category.

Ms. Goblirsh said she was much more inclined to support the Coast Guard program presented by LT Paitl. Previously the Coast Guard sounded as if it were saying it would enact these new regulations without data to back it up.

Ms. Hughes asked if this data matched the data LT Paitl had presented?

LT Penoyer said that theirs might be just a little bit tighter.

Mr. Green noted that fire is a significant problem on fishing vessels, resulting in few deaths, but many vessel losses. Also he asked if the new system would have the capability to do regional analysis?

LT Penoyer said those things are another layer deeper than where we are now, but the next chop on it will be more specific and you would be able to abstract information by district.

Dave Dickey, said he feels there is sometimes too much emphasis on specifics such as which District and gear type. The accidents that happened last year, weren't merely Mid-Atlantic, or clammer accidents, but in every one of those, there was a lack of training and drills. He sees many similarities in human factors and would like to see more of that type of analysis.

Ms. Goblirsh asked if they could also incorporate a training and education portion? She said that might enable the Coast Guard to determine if it is making a difference.

LT Penoyer said they could, but investigators look for obvious reasons. If training was a factor in the casualty then they will note it, otherwise it may not be noted. We need a yes or no question to cover that information. We can evolve the system and add things as we decide.

Ms. Hughes asked if they would get to look at some of the drafts G-MOA is working on?

LT Penoyer said that the information the technical people have put together could not be easily understood, but he could provide them with some of the pick lists.

RADM North said that if they could not give them something they could understand from the contractor, they would translate it into something they could review.

Mr. Herbert requested feedback to the ADM about how the Committee feels about this direction. Do they think the Coast Guard has taken feedback from industry and the Committee and is on the right track?

Ms. Goblirsh said it seems like the Coast Guard is listening. The new data collection system sounds like an opportunity to gather data in a different and better way.

Mr. Herbert asked about the 8 points discussed earlier in LT Paitl's presentation.

Mr. Green said it appeared to be the first real definitive undertaking of a safety program. He liked what he saw.

Mr. Hall liked it. It seems like a much bigger commitment for the long term.

Mr. Potter was happy that we found a common line for communication and seemed to be heading down the same path. He thinks competency standards are not undue.

Ms. Eismann said we have to keep moving forward, but she was really encouraged. It seems the Committee and Coast Guard are seeing eye to eye and heading in the same direction.

Mr. Herbert said he appreciated the importance RADM North has attached to fishing vessel safety and the hard work from Headquarters' people.

Mr. Martin, Sr. voiced his approval of mandatory exams.

Mr. Herbert asked what kind of reception they thought they would get from industry?

Mr. Leland said the key was going to be putting this out and explaining why and the importance. Although, it looks great, it will be somewhat hard to go to the little guy in a 30-ft. boat and tell him he is going to have to comply with this.

Ms. Hughes said she was thrilled. With good data to back up what the Coast Guard will be requiring, it will not easily be refuted. After the Coast Guard has good data they must go to industry and consider how to mitigate these problems.

Mr. Martin said he was encouraged, but it should be recognized that the Committee should not be tasked with selling this to industry. The Coast Guard should be on the firing line at seminars and expos to present this to industry. Industry should be brought into the fold before the action plan is completed and the Coast Guard should attempt direct communication with industry.

Mr. Herbert asked if the Coast Guard would have a representative at Fish Expo and was told by LT Paitl and Ms. Hughes that they would.

RADM North said all of the Committee members and their various venues would be necessary to get the word out to industry. If the Committee is supportive of it here, they should be supportive of in their fishing community. The first level of industry support is committee support.

Ms. Goblirsh asked if they could see the press release before it goes out?

Ms. Hughes stressed the importance of explaining the difference between inspection and exam; fishing vessels would not want to become "inspected" vessels.

Mr. Simns said it should be presented to industry as a win not a loss. For example, instead of mandatory inspections, it is a safety exam and instead of requiring a license, there will be required training.

RADM North spoke about the process of getting membership slates approved and explained how difficult it could be to get the slate through the entire approval process to the Secretary of Transportation. This was the reason some outgoing members do not have replacements yet. Outgoing members may be allowed to return for another meeting if replacements were not approved before the next meeting.

Ms. Goblrsh requested ex-members remain on the mailing list.

Ms. Goblrsh's Communication plan was distributed to the Committee ( TASK 99-01 COMMUNICATIONS, attached to the end of these minutes).

Mr. Herbert noted that a lot of what is contained in the plan was discussed that morning.

Ms. Goblrsh summarized the plan as follows:

They kept it simple. A lot has come out in the previous discussion. Communication between industry and Coast Guard has left a lot to be desired. Part of the difficulty is there is no one group or association to communicate throughout the industry. Also the Coast Guard's normal channels of communication are the federal registers, which is not usually read by most fishermen. The website is being used more by industry, but should not be relied upon. Information needs vary somewhat depending on your role in industry. Crews and Skippers are most concerned with safety information for those on boats. She mentioned the need for a central fishing vessel safety section. There should be civilians for continuity. The subcommittee recommends a web site that is less awkward and aimed at safety, which could be downloaded for a newsletter. Perhaps the Coast Guard could develop a memorandum of understanding with a national publication and provide them with a regular column or page from Headquarters. Possible content would include lessons learned and safety information. Something similar could also be done for regional publications.

Mr. Potter made a motion for a resolution to adopt the general principles and guidelines of the commercial fishing vessel safety program presented to them that morning.

Seconded by Mr. Simns.

Mr. Herbert asked if they were prepared to endorse the principles expressed in the plan given by Joe Paitl in order to show at least their level of support as RADM North had requested earlier.

The vote was tabled so that the Vice Commandant could present awards to the outgoing members.

CAPT Basel discussed the new Fishing Vessel Safety division. It would be headed by CAPT Westerholm and would include some of the same people they were already familiar with, as well as a number of others. The plan includes civilians for continuity purposes as recommended by the Committee.

CAPT Westerholm said one of the flexibilities they have is to quickly assemble a group. He asked for the Committee to let them know if they were missing something in the action items.

Mr. Green questioned what the long-term function would be. Since the passage of the Fishing Vessel Safety Act he thinks that fishing vessel safety has been kind of a distant

cousin to other Coast Guard initiatives. When you get down to increasing the regulations, would long-term commitment be there, or is it still a second cousin? For military people fishing vessel safety is kind of a dead-end.

CAPT Westerholm said most fishing vessel safety coordinators are already civilian, and he does not see fishing vessel safety as a dead-end career. He said the Department of Transportation has four initiatives at the forefront, by which they will be judged. One of the flagship initiatives is fishing vessel safety. It is the only one that's not intermodal, which means it does not include two modes of transportation.

The Committee reviewed the 9 action items. Each is listed below, followed by highlights from flip charts.

### Drill Enforcement

-Where would the resources to train drill instructors come from? The fishing industry would be required to get drill instructors trained and the Coast Guard would check to make sure the monthly drills are being done.

-Are Station Bills being checked?

-What would be necessary to prove drills are being conducted? (e.g. copy of certificate?, demonstration of a drill?)

-There is currently no requirement for any kind of log.

Mr. Green said he would like the owner to be responsible. He also said there was a need to look at the population of boats and keep in mind the size of the boat and the cultural differences.

Ms. Goblirsh said the owners run most of the boats and they need to have some kind of documentation.

Mr. Herbert said the problem he sees with keeping a training/drill log on board is that if the boat sinks, it's lost.

Ms. Goblirsh said to simply keep a copy at home

Ms. Ruhle said they are told they have to have a log on board.

Mr. Herbert said that is not necessarily true, but that is the word a lot of people get.

Ms. Hughes pointed out the requirement for a station bill as contained in 46 C.F.R. Part 28.265. It applies to fishing vessels beyond the boundary line or with more than 16 people onboard and applies to most fishing vessels.

LT Paitl pointed out that in some places the boundary line is beyond 50 miles and a written station bill is not enforceable.

Ms. Hughes said in order to meet the requirement contained in that sub-part (46 C.F.R. 28.265 (5), it seems you would have to write down each person's responsibilities because the regulation states that the captain must formally identify the person who will respond to various emergencies.

CDR Prescott pointed out there is nothing in there that says it has to be written down.

Ms. Hughes said that looked like something easy enough to fix,

Ms. Eismann agreed and said that if she saw her name written down on a station bill and didn't know what they were asking of her, she would be inclined to find out.

Mr. Martin said he agrees with mandatory logging of training and drills, but trying to change the culture might be difficult. Perhaps just the requirement to log drills would be enough and mandatory exams would cover it.

#### Regulatory Project on Stability

- Have it reviewed by the Coast Guard's technical staff.

CDR Prescott said initially stability regulations were for vessels > 79 ft. The revised regulation is in draft form and they intend to go forward with it. RADM North has something to say about how high it is in priority and he thinks the stability project will move way up on the list, so he doesn't anticipate it to be a long process. He said to keep in mind it will still only apply to new vessels.

Mr. Herbert asked if it is similar to what Mr. Green's committee did?

CDR Prescott said it will be looked at again, but he thinks it's going to be very close to what Mr. Green's sub-committee presented.

Mr. Green said as far as he knew, it had never really been looked at by Coast Guard inspection people.

CDR Prescott said Tom Miller of G-MSE had rewritten it.

Mr. Green said that he knew that, and disagreed with rewriting from a technical document into something folksy. In his opinion it would not read as well.

#### Data Improvement

- Concern was expressed over "transiting with gear".

- Analysis of data that can be applied to lessons learned.

- Regional aspects should be passed to Headquarters.

Mr. Green said there were a lot of paradoxes here, fishing days have gone way down, and he's not convinced at all whether there has been a decrease in vessel or personnel loss. CAPT Basel said what he heard from the Committee is a need to keep plugging away at the numbers.

Mr. Green would like to see it take on a more regional flavor and start approaching the problems in problem areas.

#### Develop Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Division at Headquarters

- Civilianize key positions.

- Revisit the past.

Mr. Herbert said it would possibly be a five-person shop with 1-2 civilians. It could come together quickly and is one of the things the Committee has asked for.

Mr. Potter thinks it should be headed by a high ranking Coast Guard officer and for consistency a lot of civilians.

#### Coordinate Fishery Management with Safety

- More active communication between NMFS and Coast Guard.

- The Coast Guard should realize that their input pertaining to safety can influence management.

- Should interact at state level also.

Mr. Herbert said they should coordinate fisheries management with safety.

Mr. Herbert asked Mr. Jimmy Ruhle for his perspective from the mid-Atlantic community fisherman.

Mr. Ruhle said the Mid-Atlantic was fortunate to have someone from the Coast Guard attending the meetings. They have always had someone qualified there that was concerned with the Mid-Atlantic, but he wasn't as familiar with the Coast Guard representative there now. He added that participation from those higher up in the organization might have a positive impact.

Mr. Herbert said that if most crabbers in the Bering Sea are lost between January and March, is it absolutely imperative to harvest in those months or could the season be slid a little?

RADM North noted that there is a certain risk that goes with certain seasons and a strong Public Affairs effort to reach this audience might be effective.



Communication (also discussed during Ms. Goblrsh's presentation)

- Develop a page/column in National Fisherman.
- Regional publications as well.
- Involve Public Affairs
- Communication is more important to reduce risk during times of year when there is a higher risk of casualties by region.
- Advisory Committee should be used as a communication tool.

Substitute Territorial Sea Baseline for boundary line

- Take islands into consideration.
- Rescue time should also be a consideration.
- Regionalization
- State/Federal documentation.

Mr. Herbert asked the Committee to give some thought to the two remaining topics, mandatory exams and training, for the following day.

**Day 2 October 5, 1999.**

A notebook was passed to Committee members to write down fishing vessel publications from their regions and high risk time periods.

Mr. Herbert opened the meeting by asking if anyone had questions or concerns that they had thought of overnight. Mr. Potter said "We are breaking into two subcommittees today and I assumed wrongly that we would be breaking into Crew Training and Captain training but we are just doing Captain training. I don't understand this because in the past it has been documented that crews have been trained by non-authorized Coast Guard Trainers so I suspect this training has been faulty. Captains can't be tied into crew training although they should know what the crew knows. The Captains should be able to receive the same training as the crew plus additional training. I prefer to work from the bottom up rather than the top down. That is two subcommittees right there. I'm not trying to rock the boat but just look at the big picture."

LT Paitl said action items details are being worked on and there is a broad category that covers the crew and CAPT.

CAPT Westerholm said what Mr. Potter mentioned is the type of information they hope to get out of our sub-committees for training and exams.

After reviewing a list of Coast Guard approved training programs, Mr. Martin, Sr. expressed his disapproval over a school in his area on the list.

CAPT Westerholm explained that schools submit their training program for approval and if it meets the outlined requirements then it is approved. There is an auditing process for these schools and anyone who has a problem with one of them can log a formal complaint with the Coast Guard and it will be reviewed.

Information was to be provided to Mr. Martin to file a complaint.

The Committee was split into 2 groups to discuss training of vessel crews and mandatory dockside examinations of fishing vessels.

The Committee regrouped and reports were presented from a representative from each subcommittee.

Mr. Martin, Sr., presented the report from the safety exam sub-committee. They recommend the mandatory safety exam be conducted in accordance with the requirements in Part 28. They would require an exam every 2 years by the Coast Guard and a self-exam every one year in between. They would be required to document the self-exam and present it to the Coast Guard examiner the next year. He stressed the importance of having the examiners also point out other deficiencies while onboard such as holes in the hull or bad wiring. The Coast Guard would conduct the exams.

CDR Prescott pointed out that the auxiliary is approved by the Coast Guard to conduct these exams.

Mr. Herbert said they could be conducted by anyone approved by the Coast Guard.

Mr. Martin, Sr. said they would be given some kind of certification or decal with an expiration date upon completion of the exam. They tried to separate inshore from offshore, but they concluded it would be best to make it straight across the board. The owner would be responsible for the self-exam. The Coast Guard should be given the authority to shut it down if they find out it has not had a safety exam.

CAPT Westerholm asked if it should be terminated if it has not had an exam, but is otherwise safe?

Ms. Goblirsh said she would recommend a fine rather than termination.

Mr. Green recommended the Coast Guard target high-risk fisheries for exams.

CAPT Westerholm asked if user fees were discussed?

Mr. Martin, Sr. said they were not discussed.

Mr. Green said that if there were third parties involved, there would be a fee.

CDR Prescott said they should also recognize there is a need for a phase in period. Mr. Simns said they often have trouble getting a voluntary exam. What will happen when it's mandatory and you have to have some kind of a time frame for these inspections? Fishermen have enough bills, who will pay for the exam?

Mr. Martin, Sr. said there would be a phase in period and once the cycle starts, you would not have to do all the boats at once.

Mr. Simns suspects it would be at least two years to get all the boats examined and then it would be time to start again.

Mr. Martin, Sr. said Congress would have to appropriate more money, but for the moment, if they didn't present them with some kind of plan, they wouldn't get any money.

There was a brief discussion over T-boat fees and speculation on what an examination fee would run for a fishing boat.

The discussions on termination for noncompliance or discrepancies noted during an exam and exam fees were never resolved.

Mr. Green stressed the importance of calling them periodic safety exams instead of mandatory exams.

Mr. Green said the Coast Guard should identify high-risk groups and focus their attention on those areas.

CAPT Basel said what they had given him was enough to work with and present at the next meeting. We will take what you have given us and work it into a more detailed plan for your review.

Mr. Martin presented for the training sub-committee. He said the first step should be to define who is going to have mandatory training; what vessels without getting into specifics. He said there are 6 things that should be included in the required training; seamanship, basic navigation, first aid, firefighting, lifesaving procedures and equipment, stability and watertight integrity. He agreed there may be other things, but these would be a good start.

Mr. Leland said there should be drills on those 6 training items.

Mr. Martin said they would also keep the requirement for someone to conduct drills. Maybe someone from outside.

Mr. Leland said they also discussed some type of grandfathering.

RADM North returned.

Mr. Herbert told him the Committee was still in favor of the concept and they felt there was a need for some type of examination on a regular basis and that training in the form of certification for the master would be a possibility.

Mr. Martin, Sr., asked if they should put it in the form of a motion?

They summarized the subcommittees' reports for RADM North.

Mr. Herbert asked if there were any concerns?

Mr. Hall asked if two years was reasonable for the safety exam? Are some fisheries more hazardous?

Mr. Herbert and Mr. Green recommended focusing on the hot spots.

RADM North said that given the Committee's support of that approach, what they could do is take their basic guidance, and flush out some guidelines and bring it back to them at the next meeting.

Mr. Herbert asked their opinion on fines?

Mr. Martin, Sr. said there has to be something in the final version about a penalty for noncompliance with the safety exam. Perhaps they could issue an 835 for correction of any discrepancies within 30 days or before you sail. It should also depend on the deficiency.

Mr. Herbert said there is also a general feeling the master should have the training to be able to demonstrate key skills or knowledge to his crew.

Mr. Martin said it was also mentioned that reoccurring training or some kind of refresher training should be considered and training could be conducted in categories/phases.

Mr. Herbert said the cost of training and exams and grandfathering are a concern. The length of training would effect cost.

CDR Prescott said the problem with grandfathering is that you are in effect saying that the status quo is acceptable and you won't prevent accidents by the people who are out there now. Some basic knowledge of safety equipment is necessary for all operators.

RADM North said those things would require legislation. In the meantime they will work on a press release. An approach that they took as part of the Marine Transportation System (MTS) initiative, was listening sessions. They conducted regional listening sessions in the Northeast, Southeast, Gulf, Northwest, and California. The idea was to

gather input from as many people as possible during these 2-day sessions. He said they need the stakeholders involvement and to listen to what people have to say. He would do something similar for this initiative. Perhaps it is something we could work through the various fishing vessel coordinators. For the MTS listening sessions day one was open microphone and the second day was a more focused group for tighter discussions. They did about one a week, every other week, then got together at a national conference attended by the Secretary of Transportation. It took about 15 months to complete. This action plan may not need national conference, but listening sessions would be a way of saying we're not going to stick these regulations on you without your input. We're going to flesh it out, bring it back to you and take it on the road so to speak. Rather than doing it through the federal register process, this is a more personal approach. What he would like to say in the press release is that the Coast Guard presented the Committee some long term and short-term action items and then took your input, fleshed it out and will then take it on the road.

Mr. Rhule said the last thing industry would expect is for the Coast Guard to ask for their opinions.

Mr. Simns made a motion to take Mr. Potters motion from the day before off the table.

Mr. Leland seconded the motion.

Mr. Herbert summarized the Committees motion into the following statement:

The Committee supports the principles expressed in the Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Plan as presented by LT Joe Paitl on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, 1999 and understanding that modifications and suggestions on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October, 1999 be incorporated. We understand that many of the action areas are in the early stages and we hope to contribute to and review future concept development.

He asked those in favor to say I.

All Committee members responded "I".

The motion was so moved.

There was no date set for the next meeting.

The meeting concluded at 1545.

## **TASK 99-01**

### **Communications**

**Committee Members:** Ginny Goblirsch, Chair; Jim Herbert; Angela Sanfilippo; Julie Aydelotte, Barbara Bragdon. Input from Dennis Potter.

**Task Title:** Communications

**Description of Task:** Recommend ways for the Coast Guard, other government agencies, and the commercial fishing industry to gather, evaluate and share safety information.

**Goal:** Improve the availability and usefulness of safety information to the commercial fishing industry.

**Audience:** F/V crewmembers, skippers, managers and owners

**Source:** USCG, CFVS and CFIVAC supplemented by NTSB, OSHA, NIOSH, and NMFS

**Background:**

The commercial fishing industry continues to top the National Safety Council's list of most dangerous occupations. It is also listed as the occupation with the highest risk. This in spite of the implementation of the Vessel Safety Act of 1988, which mandated a host of required safety equipment for fishing vessels.

Communication, training and education were minimally addressed under the Act even though human error is the leading cause of accidents at sea.

This task statement will address ways to improve the flow of safety information between the Coast Guard and the fishing industry.

**Problem Statement:**

Comments and recommendations from the fishing industry to the Coast Guard have generally not been sought, gathered, shared and acted on in a satisfactory manner. Input from working fishermen should be encouraged, appreciated and considered.

The Coast Guard is not using the forms of communication used by most fishermen. Notifications concerning proposed and new regulations are published in the Federal Register. Most fishermen do not read the Federal Register.

Other methods of communication from the Coast Guard include press releases and notices sent to regional Coast Guard fishing vessel safety coordinators. These vary in effectiveness depending on the extent to which the press releases are picked up by the media and how the regional coordinators interact with the industry.

There is no group or association that communicates with all members of industry on a national level. Industry has never developed effective communication channels beyond fishery or issue specific associations.

Most information about regulatory changes reaches the fleet via word of mouth. While this can be very effective, it is an extremely unreliable way to disseminate uncorrupted information.

Public sector information systems are almost non-existent for fishermen on a

national basis.

The Coast Guard has a web page but does not sufficiently advertise it to industry. Internet access limitations have eliminated many fishermen while at sea. Many fishermen, especially crew, do not yet regularly use the web even while in port. This is slowly changing, however. Vessel owners and managers are increasingly using it as are crew, although to a lesser degree.

There is no Coast Guard system for delivering safety information directly to the fishing industry. This is particularly problematic for preventative type information such as product recalls, lessons learned, best practices and the like.

Fishery management councils generally do not address safety issues even though specifically mentioned in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Act.

Historically, vessel owners have done a poor job of communicating safety information to their crew.

#### **Information Needs:**

Fishermen who are exposed to dangers at sea are in most need of a reliable, regularly updated information source that deals with their personal safety and the safety of their vessels.

Information needs of skippers, crews, and owners differ. For example, skippers and crews desire information on issues that they have some control over. Crew needs include "reaction" training - drills, rough weather procedures, and use of equipment. Skippers would also be concerned with "prevention" issues - training, stability, navigation and ship handling, equipment use, maintenance, recalls, casualty reports and so on. Owners and managers needs include all the above plus information about new equipment, proposed regulations, and enforcement.

Communications to industry should include notification of proposed regulatory changes and new regulations, clarification of existing regulations (especially on a regional basis), lessons learned, casualty analysis, product recalls and warnings, new products and best marine practices.

Recommendations directly from industry as well as from safety experts should be solicited.

#### **Recommendations:**

There is a need for a uniform safety information system for captains and crews as well as for owners and managers.

National:

*HQ CFVS:* Reorganization at USCG Headquarters is necessary to assure the timely compilation of safety data and information and its effective dissemination. Safety information needs to be funneled to one focal point within the Coast Guard. The Fishing Vessel Casualty Task Force recommended the creation of a Headquarters Fishing Vessel Safety Division (HQ CFVS) within the Office of Compliance (G-MOC). A senior civilian would lead this division to enhance continuity. The CFVS coordinators endorsed this recommendation.

We recommend that this be taken a step further. The HQ CFVS unit should stand on its own.

A primary responsibility of HQ CFVS would be to gather pertinent safety information and disseminate it in an easily understood form suitable for publication.

Information sources would include all other sectors at HQ (MSO, MOC, MSE, MOA,

OPL, and MSE-4). Each should provide regular reports to HQ CFVS on relevant issues. Other federal sources of information would include NTSB, NMFS, OSHA, and NIOSH. HQ CFVS should receive monthly input from CFVS coordinators. A written information update would be developed from the reports. As a specific example, regional coordinators, following a standard format, could submit two articles a year for use in a lessons learned column in a national periodical.

Information developed by HQ CFVS would be shared with the fishing industry via CFVS coordinators, a Coast Guard safety web site, newsletters, and industry journals. The CFIVAC should provide oversight to this activity.

*Web site:*

Design a fishing industry web site to disburse information on pending regulations, IMO, UN, Federal Register extracts, research and development items, lessons learned, casualty analysis, product recalls and warnings, new products, best practices, regional safety issues and other topics identified by CFVS and industry as desirable and useful. Industry should be given the opportunity to provide suggestions and feedback directly to HQ CFVS via e-mail on the website.

*Newsletter:*

A stand-alone newsletter could achieve the same results as a web site but would be more costly and cumbersome. It would be more practical, however, for those who don't use the web. The web site should be designed to incorporate a downloadable electronic newsletter, which can be mailed to individuals by regional coordinators, fishermen's organizations; fishermen's wives organizations, safety organizations, owners, and/or managers. Regional safety coordinators should encourage appropriate entities in their regions to use the web site and/or receive the newsletter

*Industry Journals:*

Develop a MOU for a monthly column with a national industry journal and with key regional journals. Column content would focus on lessons learned.

**Regional:**

In addition to the monthly column with key regional journals as described above, CFVS coordinators should each develop a communication plan for the broad dissemination of safety information within their regions. This plan should be based on an assessment of safety issues and industry needs for communication. The plan should ensure that good communication reaches all sectors of the fleet in the regions.

The assessment should:

- Describe what is and what is not working under the vessel safety act.
- Identify local safety concerns and problems.
- Highlight local safety initiatives.
- Identify active industry individuals and groups that can or are doing a good job of communicating with industry locally and regionally.
- Describe safety information and communication needs requested by industry.

This would mean meeting with industry groups, leaders, and individuals to gather their input, keeping in mind the differing needs of crew, skippers and owners (and managers). Suggestions from industry on better ways to communicate should also be solicited. With this information, CFVS coordinators would be able to advise HQ CFVS on regional issues and needs. CFVS coordinators would also have a basic contact list for industry in their regions.

The trend to employ civilian CFVS coordinators is encouraged as a way to address the



problem of constantly rotating personnel and the need to develop solid, on-going communication channels with industry in all regions. The importance of the need to encourage industry involvement and feedback throughout all communication channels cannot be overemphasized.

**Timeline:**

Within 3 months, regional assessments should be completed.

Within 6 months, an effective regional communication plan should be in place.

Within 6 months a MOU with a national periodical for a dedicated lessons learned column should be in place.

The design and implementation of a web site would probably take up to one year. It could be done faster building on the existing USCG site.

Reorganization at HQ would take one to two years.